

91 Black Rock Ave.

Bridgeport Conn.

April 16, 1893

My dear sisters

A. M. A. and A. B. C.

I find a few quiet moments just as the beautiful Sabbath draws to close and I hope I may be able to say a few words to you. When I speak of anyone not saying much Louisa says "I suppose they think it not necessary" and now I wonder if it is necessary for me to fill pages to you telling of myself and my own experiences but knowing that you do love me and do wish to know something of my daily walk - I will try and gratify you - tho I hardly know how to begin - and certainly cannot tell of the end. The accident to Vinton occurred at 3.30 Wedns. P.M. Feb 8 -All of the polishing on screwdrivers, mincing knives - pruning shears - etc. etc. - was done by Mr. E. and V. on amary wheels. That one had never been used - it differed a little from usual, and there was some discussion in regard to it - and some of the men advised V. not to use it - but the work was urgent - and he took the risk. He was bending over it - adjusting it while it was running at the rate of 2500 per minute - when it exploded - striking him between the eyes - crushing his forehead - and destroying his nose and throwing him to the floor. Mr. E. stood near - and saw it all - he thought he was surely killed. Strange to say - he did not quite lose consciousness - As they raised him up - he said "God help me - father pray for me" - the ambulance soon came and his father and Mr. Knapp went with him to the Drs. office. Even there he did not faint - and when they brought home - walked into the house with help. Mr. Knapp said he never saw such "grit." Louisa had been to see me - and had only been home a few minutes when he was brought in - She bore it as she has all these sad things with wonderful calmness - and true christian resignation. As the hours passed that even - for Mr. Erwins return I began to feel very anxious - it was prayer meeting night - and at 7 o c - went into my neighbors - and told him I must ask him soon to go out and learn for me his whereabouts - just then he came - and when he told me - I said "I fear that is Vintons death blow" Mr. E. returned very soon - and I made preparations for going early next morning and for staying a while - it was too icy and dark that night and Mary was

with me - Next day - as I locked my doors and went out I said "goodbye - home". I felt - as it has proved to be, the last of our life - in the cozy little Grove St. home. Mr. E. has never seen the house since - has been too busy to go there. Vinton was perfectly conscious Thurs. and part of Friday - at 4 P.M. Fri. he said to the Drs. who dressed his wounds - "don't let my wife see the wounds" That night he began to grow restless, inflammation of the brain had set in - and before morning he grew so wild we had to call in help besides the two watchers who were with him. After that - the Dr. kept him under the influence of powerful hypodermic injections - until his death, which was at 1:30 P.M. Sunday. It was very hard not to see his face - it being bandaged - except below the ears - he had a very full beard and mustache all winter which were very becoming - both were sheared away and I could hardly make it seem that it was Vinton - it all seemed more real to Mr. E. because he saw all the worst of it - Our family - the curse - and Mr. and Mrs. Stultz - Adventists - were present at his death - Mr. S. and V. were bosom friends - and when we saw that the heart had ceased to beat - I said "Brother Stultz - can you pray?" We all knelt and our hearts were lifted up by the beautiful words of prayer by this dear gifted christian man - very soon our friends from all parts of the city began to come in - to sorrow - and to rejoice with us - as only God's children can, and just at eve - our three deacons came together and before they left - they each one prayed - so very expressively in faith and consolation - Truly our house has been a Bethel - Bro. Stultz always prays with us (he lives near here) Rev. J.W. Davis - Advent - who loved Vinton so dearly - and greatly beloved by V. often comes - and he brings peace in prayer - and spiritual talks. Last week the ladies from Advent ch. held their prayer meeting here with us in the P.M. They sang some beautiful songs. They are great Bible students. They are a very active ch. (always talking of Jesus coming - and living in readiness) - I do not wonder that Vinton loved them so much - I love them too - but Mr. E. and myself choose "the old paths" - and the Congl. ch is our choice We do wish there was more spiritual activity. I can never tell how thankful I am that Vinton was led to those people - they helped him into such a blessed experience - changing his life - so it was truly "hid with Christ" - and I have such strong assurance that he is saved --His constant desire to know and to do God's will the past year - and his last beautiful testimony - in prayer

meeting the night before the accident - they all love to tell us how he stood with open Bible in hand - and speaking from the words - "all things shall work together for good to those who love God". (The all things is a favorite expression of his Pastor Mr. Davis) So knowing his earnest purpose of heart - and his daily study of God's Word - We have not a shadow of a doubt - that "it is well" with our Vinton. He rests, while we toil and struggle on, fighting "the good fight of faith" and having evidence of our acceptance with God. It was an unspeakable comfort to us that Louisa bore it all so bravely - she certainly is a remarkably consistent christian woman. On account of her near confinement - we could not all go to D. R. for burial - and a kind lady suggested our leaving the body in the receiving vault here - for a while. It was a great relief to me to have it so - the funeral was held in East Bpt. 2 miles from here, in the Advent ch. - Mr. Davis conducting the services - Mr. Prentiss (our Pastor) was to assist - but was not well - so was not present - More than two years ago - Vinton selected texts and wrote on the flyleaf of his Bible - and told Louisa he wished them to be used at his funeral - 2 Thess. 4:13-18 - Titus 2:13-14 - It was a remarkably impressive service - My heart was so filled with exaltation - I could not weep - I felt more like rejoicing as the glories of resurrection morning were portrayed. Mr. E. and Louisa felt the same - the singing was beautiful - "Abide with me", "Sweetly Sleeping" and at my request, Mrs Stacy sang very sweetly - "Flee as a bird" - and a quartette sang - "The Christians Goodnight" (in No.6)". We requested our friends in both churches not to buy flowers - but the Advent End. Soc. sent a great flat box of Easter lillies, his shopmates - a large bouquet of roses - and Mr. and Mrs. Melville (Congl.) another bouquet of roses - all were tied with white satin ribbon, and a Temp. Soc. of which Vinton had been a member sent an elegant Maltese Croas. The Congl. and Advent Endvr. Societies sat in a body - wearing badges. My brothers Wallace and Albert came on from Boston - it gave us a good deal of comfort to have them there - and I cannot take time to tell of all it would take pages - to tell of all the wonderful kindness - sympathy - and generosity - of all the people - it seemed as if the whole city was stirred with sympathy - they showed it in so many ways - and quickly; The eve of Feb. 14 - Dec. Northrup came in - the night before the funeral - and said "Deacon, our church has sent you a Valentine" handing us a long envelope filled with bills. As we hesitated,

he says - "guessa how much there is" - We said "there must be more than \$20" He replied "there are \$108." You may well believe we were almost overcome - and soon after, a lady from Advent church came and put in Louisa's hands a gift from Chris. Endvr. & ch. of \$61. We were truly amazed - and could only say it is the wonderful goodness and mercy of God. and there followed \$75 from the firm and employees, and some small donations privately - all this before the funeral - and since then the Co. has paid the Funeral expenses and burial to Deep River and one Drs. bill of \$25. O how can we but feel that God's loving hand is open toward us - We do trust every promise. And it seems as if never was a family so much prayed for. I said "I know you all wonder that I do not weep more - I wonder myself - that I am so calm" - Mrs. Abbott says - "you are upheld by the prayers of your friends." and it was so in Louisa's sickness - it seemed as if all we had to do - was to be carried along. Since then the St. Peter Lodge - Odd Fellows - has sent her a donation of \$50 - V. had not met the last Quarterly dues - so she could not claim anything - someone from Arcanum Lodge here wrote to them. They sent her a very kind letter - Arcanum furnished a nurse three days - Louisa's income entirely ceased at Vinton's death - so you may know how much all this has helped and encouraged us all - We are thankful there were no debts left unpaid. Our rooms in Grove St. were too small to keep us all - L's sickness making such a difference - so we were obliged to move our goods over here - as there are six rooms here, and close by Mr. E's work - which has crowded and worried him very much - since Vinton ceased work - he could not get one half hour to help me - So I had all the care of moving as I have of everything concerning us - and on L's account I must hurry to get moved here - and save rent beside - It was only \$11 over there, and here it is \$15. It cost me \$13 to move - I had to take two of the worst days of the winter to tear up and pack - I have to walk quite a distance at each end of the route to get street cars - and the first morning I went over - was as near a blizzard as could be - cold - snowing - blowing - as I waded through a deep snowdrift - I began to pity myself - I thought of Peter sinking and I said "Lord save or I perish" - And then came the words - "but I know in whom I have believed-v" - and then I lifted up my heart - for I thought of your dear Alice - and that wonderful experience of yours - and I said - "dear Father this is the stormiest experience of my life - I know that you helped Alice - out of

deeper seas than this - I know that thy power can take me safely through all that lies before me" Again I thought of how you was lifted out of the depths - it seemed that all needful help came to me - and I was borne along - and I had two good strong women sent to me before noon - and they helped me bravely through that and the second day - so I had no real heavy things to do - the third day a truck man brought them here - and they are stacked up in two chambers - waiting till we can find rooms that suit us better - and move again - I trust God's mercy through it all - still there is an intense nervous strain for we must plan - for such a variety of work - Louisa thinks now - she will go to her parents in St. Peter (7 miles out - on farm) about the middle of June. I think she will conclude to leave Mary with us - but it is hard for her to do it and hard for her to leave us - we have always done all for her that we could for an own daughter - She appreciates it - If we had a home - and larger income would urge their staying with us - but Mr. E. is breaking down I fear. V's death was a great shock to him - They had worked side by side for four yrs - and the past year, christian sympathies had brought them very close to each other. So now comes sewing - and packing - and selling off things which L. feels badly to part with - I cannot look forward to a very restful summer - I never had such a wearisome experience - the noise and confusion - and unhomelikeness of it all - and Vinton's burial too - will be a sad time for us all - We think of going to D.P. - May 10 hoping to return same day - will take Albert and Mary - & leave Carl (2 yrs old last December - a beautiful boy-) with a kind lady near here. Baby Ruth is a sweet little creature - born Mar. 7 - she must go with us - Vinton said a few weeks before his death - "if it is a girl lets name her Ruth." The nurse promised to stay 2-1/2 weeks - but was suddenly called to another engagement at the end of the 1st week so it left me in a hard place - but I bought all the cooked food I could - hired washing & ironing and was carried through, and now I will tell you of one more strain on my poor head. We have rec'd over 50 letters - and I have replied to all but One - besides numerous Postals - and then our Ladies Aid Soc. had planned a Sale of Aprons from all over States - the 20th of Apr. to help on ch. debt - (the "Spectre") and they say I was the one who started it - some mos. ago - I had planned to get 20 aprons and did write for 21 - and I rec'd 19 - which required two letters each - I never could have done all this - but

for "grace - wonderful grace." It was a "labor of love" - and I am glad it is over - The night of the sale was very stormy - they sold \$20 worth - and had some left for another occasion - As I look back - I am filled with wonder - that I have lived through it all - We have many callers - and our days are hurried and never accomplish half we think we need to do. The baby frets a good deal - and L. cannot help me as she would like to, and it does seem many times as if my head and heart and back - will entirely fail me. and I wonder if I can keep up 5 or 6 weeks longer this heavy load of care - and work - I have felt for two years - as if I could hardly keep house - tho I hired nearly all my heavy work done. The trouble all comes from nervous weakness - and nothing but rest will bring relief. After the children leave - and we get moved - have no idea now where we will find rooms - and we get moved - I am going to try and favor myself. Every day the word tells me "my God shall supply all your need" and all my prayer is "Thy will be done." Beautiful letters have come in showers - from North - South - East - and West - Thank God for christian fellowship - and "intercession of the saints" - Your own precious letters and "True Comfort" booklet gave me an unspeakable comfort - how gladly I would reply to every line in each - if only I had time and strength. At times it has seemed as if you were both very near - almost within touch. I cannot express it - the sense - of your influence - and the blessing your own experiences have brought to me, in the past - and now. Truly God's mercies are "more than I can ask or even think." Now it is Apr. 30 - and I must write another "joint" letter to sister Carrie B. - David - and Wm. in Wisconsin - have never given them particulars of Vinton's death and funeral - The apress I secured were 2 from Medford Minn - 1 from Montana - Iowa - Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Alabama - Florida - Calif., Mich, Conn. 5 - Mass. 3 - now I will "give you a rest"

Yours - truly - truly - E.G.Erwin

Letter was in an envelope addressed to Mrs. A. M. Alden, Waseca, Minnesota
Waseca Co. (Exact copy, retaining original spelling, punctuation, etc.)

From E.A.E. to H.E.P. - San F. Cal.

Feb. 1893

Account of Vinton's sickness and death

Bridgeport Conn.

91 Black Rock Ave.

Feb. 2B - 1893

Dear Brother Howard -

We received your kind letter a few days ago - and were glad to know that you had heard from us - even tho it was such sad news.

We were sure of your love and sympathy - and we felt a good deal sorry for you - for we know you must feel something of homesickness so far away and without work.

Vinton felt a strong affection for you tho he was always quiet about it - We asked ourselves today "was that Vinton we saw sick - wounded and dying - and laid away in the tomb?" It seems like a cruel dream - and even when we saw him it all came so sudden - and his face nearly covered with bandages so that we could only see from below his ears - that it hardly seemed like reality. The cruel blow was struck Feb. 8 - he died the 12th - and was laid in the tomb the 15th. I felt from the first that it was his death blow for I knew his frailty - the doctor said it was the worst place in the head to be wounded - and I feared heart failure - The Dr. said he could not have lived more than two yrs - under very favorable circumstances - and his heart was enlarged four times more than natural size - and it was constantly enlarging. We had two Drs. - and a good nurse - and callers and offers of help from far and near. It was a wonderful surprise all the time - the kindness - and it seemed as if the whole city felt sympathy for us - even Vinton expressed surprise the next day after the accident - that so many called to inquire about him - We talked a good deal that day - tho in much pain in his head - he realized it all - and was willing that it should all be God's way. There is so much you would like to know - I write and write - to so many I am nearly worn out in body and mind - for all the care falls on me. The wheel was an imperfect one - had never been used - and there was a good deal of talk among the men about it before V. concluded to run the risk of using - as he needed it then. He had not begun to work on it - the power rate of speed was unusually high when it burst - throwing him back to the floor - Altho his face was so dreadfully crushed - he never

lost consciousness - not even under the operation of dressing the wound. Jas. saw it all - and went with him to the Drs. It was a great shock to Jas. I never saw him so affected and broken up - and - dejected - He was obliged to go right in to work next day in order to keep his situation after being up all night - and is having a tedious and unprofitable time trying to break in two green hands to work - he only lost one half day - and day of funeral - He seems more cheerful now - more like himself - but he misses Vinton very much - and sometimes turns to speak and tell him something now. Vinton was hurt Wedne. P.M. - did not talk much after Fri. A.M. - at 4 P.M. the Drs. removed his bandages and he said "don't let my wife see the wound" That night he began to be very delirious - inflammation of the brain set in - and toward morning we had to call in three men to help us - it was terrible - he was determined to tear off bandages - After that, Dr. gave hypodermic injections often and kept him more quiet till he ceased to breathe - but had to be watched every moment. Dr. thought he did not suffer - we hoped he did not - he breathed like an exhausted person all the time. We could not arouse him at the last 36 hrs. It was so very sad to have his face hidden from us by the bandages - we could only see his mouth and chin. The undertakers thought they could not be left off but they finally made a very nice work of it - and laid a piece of white cotton wadding neatly trimmed over the eyes and nose and lower part of forehead - so managed it - the casket was opened at the church - we had not thought it could be. He died at 1:30 P.M. Sunday - the rooms were filled with people for 2 or 3 hrs. from West end - and his many friends from E. Bridgeport from the Advent church. I wish you could have heard the good words - and the prayers -- They sent such lovely bouquets of roses and satin ribbon - and a beautiful Maltese cross and an exquisite great flat bouquet of Easter lillies - and satin ribbon from Chris. Endeavor Soc. of which Vinton was Pres. And now I want to tell you of the generosity of our friends - before the funeral Dea Northrop came to us Feb. 14 with a large envelope saying "here is a Valentine from your friends of West end ch" - It contained 108 dollars. Then came from Advent ch. for Louisa \$61, Knaff & Cowles \$74, Aunt M.A. \$1, Aunt Philo \$2, Unknown \$10, (with just the words with love and sympathy), Aunt Una \$10, Albert \$10, Mrs. Leonard to Louisa \$5, Mrs Akerman \$5. I know you will be glad to hear of this real help we have had - but it makes us feel bad to take it - for it came largely from hard

working people but it shows a remarkable quick response of sympathy which seems God sent. We made funeral expenses light as possible. bill of undertakers was \$68, reasonable - Supt. shop asked for the bill. We hope he is going to pay for it but not sure. We don't expect to make a claim for damages. It don't seem best to do so. Don't know Drs. bill yet. will have one soon. On account of Louise's condition - Dr. said she must not go to D. R. then so we were obliged to leave Vinton in cem'y here - until spring. It cost \$10 for rent - - \$6 for removal to train, this, the \$10 included in undertakers bill. Perhaps you remember I bought a cem. lot in D. R. 2 yrs ago with some of Frances' money - It is not far from, and in sight of our family lot. I hope we can go over in May - for burial. I wish I could tell you how comforted we all felt thinking of Vinton - Ever since the Mills meeting here - 3 yrs ago - when he fully decided to begin a christian life - he has tried every day - to live in preparation for death for he fully expected that the heart would suddenly fail him - he carried his Bible everywhere with him and loved it more and more. He worked a good deal in the missions here and in the jail - Almshouse and hospital meetings - He was Pres. of Advent Chris. Endeavor Soc. and clerk and secretary of the church, and the night before the accident in prayer meeting - he stood up with open Bible in hand and testified in words his love for Christ and talked of the text "all things" shall work together for good to them who love God." He had looked finely lately, with full wavy beard - and that in meeting, some of them said how handsome he grows. We had a very impressive funeral service at Advent ch. E. Bpt. The text from Vinton's selection 2 yrs ago and marked in his Bible for his funeral service 1st Thess, 4th chap - 13-18 verses - Mrs. Stacy sang that beautiful song we had at Susan's funeral "Flee as a bird" - and other beautiful music. I thought often of you - my dear brother and prayed that you may learn the good way of faith in God. I find I must take more paper to tell you a little more. Of course you know that we look for Louise's confinement any day now - and it does seem - if I stop to pity myself at all - as if I could not bear it - but I know I am every day and every hour upheld by God's "everlasting arm's" of mercy - and it would surprise you to know of all the hard work I have done - and am still doing. We have a good nurse engaged for two weeks - L. bears it all very patiently and calmly - uses a good deal of common sense - and is a true Christian woman. Albert and Mary realize it as well

as children can. 2 yr. old Carl will never miss his papa, tho he always put up his hands for Vinton to take him when he came in. We had not room enough in Grove St. for all - so I hired two good women to help pack, and our goods are all stored in two rooms upstairs here - cost in all \$15 to move (six rooms in all) rent \$15 per month here (it was \$11 in G at) Jas. has not been over there since the accident - you can imagine the strain I have lived with. The old barn in G. st is all down - it will be beautiful there this summer - We will find cheaper rent than this if possible. Don't know yet what Louise will do - she does not get word from her parents in St. Peter Minn. They are farmers 7 miles from P.O. nearly 70 yrs old We have placed \$100 for her in Bank (from gifts) so if she decides to go West - will have means to go - we want to do all we can - now don't feel badly because you cannot help us now. We know all about your own misfortunes and know of your generous desires - You see how God has helped us - and we trust Him for all the future. We cannot plan much till after L. is sick. I dread it - she takes so much care and work now - seems very well - We were very glad that Wall. and Albert came to the funeral. Poor W. is working too hard and hard pressed in every way. Lizzie is in very poor health - and fearful that she has cancerous trouble - Newell Bailly - Hattie Taylor - Anjinett Snow - and Adele Beard his sisters all came - and coz. Charlie Hall from North Haven. I have about 20 letters to answer now. Eva writes that you and she are corresponding Remember the words of Dickeoa - "Beware of widows" She has had a hard experience - five years of unhappy married life - her child died - then separation - the death of her father - and many cares have given her altogether a great deal of trial and sorrow - I would like to have her and Edw'd meet - but it might not be best - I cannot say. We have not heard from Ed. since last Aug. Albert said he would write to him for me. We will be glad whenever we see you back East - Jas. and I want you to know that our home is yours just as long as we all live - and assure you of a very loving welcome at any time - and "don't you forget it"

Your loving sister

E. G. Erwin

Copy of a letter hand written by Emily Erwin to her brother Herbert Pratt.
(Exact copy, retaining original spelling, punctuation, etc.)